WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

 1. A method, comprising the steps of:

 providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different; and

5 preparing a project definition, said project definition including:

 a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output

10 port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

 a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced,

15 and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

 binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one

20 of said output ports;

 wherein one of said function definitions identifies a separate application program, wherein one of said function portions which corresponds to said one function definition identifies a command for said application program, and

25 wherein execution of said one function portion causes execution of said command by said application program in a manner which affects data present in said one function portion.

2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein said data in said one function portion is image data, and including the step of selecting as said application program an image processing program.

3. A method according to Claim 1, including the steps of concurrently executing said project definition and an instance of said application program.

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4.   A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function definitions that are different, said program being operable when executed to facilitate preparation of a project

5   definition which includes:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the

10   corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data

15   destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports;

20   wherein one of said function definitions identifies a separate application program, wherein one of said function portions which corresponds to said one function definition identifies a command for said application program, and wherein execution of said one function portion causes

25   execution of said command by said application program in a manner which affects data present in said one function portion.

5.   A computer-readable medium according to Claim 4, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate preparation of said project definition to use image data as said data in said one function portion, and

5   to use an image processing program as said application program.

6.   A computer-readable medium according to Claim 5, wherein said program is operable when executed to

10   facilitate concurrent execution of said project definition and an instance of said application program.

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7. A method, comprising the steps of:

providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different;

modifying said set to include at least one custom
5   function definition which is functionally different from each of said predetermined function definitions; and

preparing a project definition, said project definition including:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond
10   to one of said function definitions in said modified set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition from said modified set;

15   a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which data
20   can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports.

25   8.   A method according to Claim 7, wherein said modifying step includes the step of creating said custom function definition by modifying one of said predetermined function definitions.

30   9.   A method according to Claim 8, wherein said modifying step includes the step of replacing in said set said one predetermined function definition with said custom function definition.

10.   A method according to Claim 8, wherein said modifying step includes the step of including in said set each of said custom function definition and said one predetermined function definition.

11.   A method according to Claim 8, wherein said modifying step includes the steps of:

modifying source code for said one predetermined function definition in a development environment;

compiling the modified source code in said development environment to obtain an object code file; and

Including said object code file in said set.

12.   A method according to Claim 11, including the step of using as said development environment an off-line development environment.

13.   A method according to Claim 11, including the step of using VisualBasic (VB) as said development environment.

14.   A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function definitions that are different, said program being operable when executed to facilitate:

5   modification of said set to include at least one custom function definition which is functionally different from each of said predetermined function definitions; and

preparation of a project definition, said project definition including:

10   a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said modified set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition from said modified

15   set;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data

20   destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports.

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15.   A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said modification of said set in a manner which includes creation of said custom function definition

30   through modification of one of said predetermined function definitions.

16. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said modification of said set in a manner which includes replacement in said set of said one predetermined
5   function definition with said custom function definition.

17. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said modification of said set in a manner which
10   includes addition to said set of said custom function definition, so that said set includes each of said custom function definition and said one predetermined function definition.

15   18. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said modification of said set in a manner which includes:
modification of source code for said one predetermined
20   function definition in a development environment;
compilation of the modified source code in said development environment so as to obtain an object code file; and
inclusion of said object code file in said set.
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19. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said modification of said set by accepting said custom function definition in a form which includes an
30   object code file prepared in a development environment separate from said program by modification and compilation of source code for said one predetermined function definition.

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20. A computer-readable medium according to Claim 19, wherein said program is operable when executed to use as said development environment VisualBasic (VB).